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suspect that Mrs. Ward is, after all, a student of mental phases rather than a story-teller, and that all her novels have some of the characteristics of a *tour de force*. Yet it would be unfair to deny that she is a writer of great power and that her descriptions of the lake country are remarkably effective.

W. P. T.

A MANUAL OF ITALIAN LITERATURE.

A HISTORY OF ITALIAN LITERATURE. By Richard Garnett, C.B., LL.D.
New York: Appleton.

This is the fourth in the series of "Literatures of the World," edited by Edmund Gosse, who has already treated the English perhaps as ably as could be hoped in the four hundred and fifty pages to which these volumes are limited, while Professor Dowden has been happy in equal measure in his treatment of French and Gilbert Murray has given a good account of ancient Greek. But perhaps none of these volumes were so needed, and surely none of those that are to follow will fill a gap so long and profoundly felt in our historical literature as this volume of Dr. Garnett's. It has been possible for the busy man of literary tastes to get a clear general view of the classical literatures—of the English, French, and German in his own tongue and with the perspective that an English point of view implies. So far as we know, this has not been possible in the case of Italian until now, and Dr. Garnett has filled the requirements of such a manual so admirably that his success is likely to deter rather than to attract imitation, so that his book may well remain unique for many years.

One need only turn to Dr. Garnett's excellent Bibliographical Note at the close of his volume to see what difficulties awaited the serious student of Italian literature as a whole. The field had in many places hardly been cleared at all. Little work had been done in English, some in French and German, and rather more, though of disappointing quality, in Italian, while in regard to some individuals, especially Dante, one was almost embarrassed by the wealth and variety of comment and criticism in every tongue.

It is just here that Dr. Garnett shows at once his discretion and his mastery of the subject. It would have been easy to have given a third of his book to Dante, who holds probably considerably more than that proportion of space in the Italian department of the minds of most of his readers; but, as he says in his Preface, he is not dealing with individual genius, but with Italian literature as a whole. He is less concerned with the greatness of the man than with his influence on letters, and he is probably right in saying that from this point of view Dante is actually less significant than Petrarch or Boccaccio; and, if many lesser men find a place in his narrative that they have not in the mind of his critic, we for our part are reasonably sure that the fault is ours, and we finish Dr. Garnett's book with the feeling that we do not know Italian literature as it becomes a scholar to know it, nor as well as we thought we did or as we still think we know the literature of France or Germany or Spain. Dr. Garnett has not only revealed new talents and new beauties, he has correlated the old knowledge by these new links, and has produced a compendium that is useful even to the professional student of literature.

Into the details of the study it would be out of place to enter here. Twenty-two pages well suffice for the literature before Dante, who is himself accorded thirty, a measure granted also, wisely we think, to Petrarch. In this brief space our author gives a judicial estimate of Dante, whom he weighs with Milton in a wavering balance, concluding that simply as poet he is less, while "as an elemental force," he must be placed in a higher category than Milton. Very judicious, too, is his comparison of Dante and Petrarch, the former intent on combining the materials he found into the most august edifice which their constitution admitted, the latter gaining new channels for feeling and intelligence. In regard both to Beatrice and Laura his position is that of the healthy realist who believes that men need a springboard of flesh and blood for their ideals of womanhood, and throughout the book this sanity of view characterizes his judgments of art and morals and, more es-

pecially, that worthy sphere of morality that, in the vision of Mrs Grundy, eclipses all the others.

Hence it is that Dr. Garnett is able to speak with justice of Boccaccio and of his "Decameron," one of the most perfect blendings of art and nature that the history of fiction has to show; far less conspicuous for its sensuality than for noble traits of courtesy and manly magnanimity. In what follows Dr. Garnett is naturally most interesting when he is speaking of the epic poets, Pulci, Boiardo, Ariosto, Berni, and Tasso, but there is more labor and more profit to the reader in the general chapters treating of the fifteenth century and its poetical renaissance, of the sixteenth century and the Petrarchists, of the novel and the drama and the like. Four chapters at the close deal with the revival that followed the French Revolution and trace the regeneration of Italian letters through the century to our own day, in which he dwells, as is natural, on Carducci and Annunzio, to whom he seems, for all his enforced brevity, more adequately just than any English critic that we have read. Altogether Dr. Garnett is to be congratulated on having done creditably a useful and needed task, and the English-speaking peoples are the richer by a readable and judicious history of a literature to which they are perhaps directly indebted in a higher degree than to any other.

B. W. W.